



Commonwealth of Virginia *Office of Governor Terry McAuliffe*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 15, 2015

Office of the Governor

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Governor McAuliffe Announces New Executive Director for Virginia Tobacco Commission

~ Governor ceremonially signs legislation to enhance Tobacco Commission ~

RICHMOND – Governor Terry McAuliffe today announced that Evan Feinman has been appointed Executive Director of the newly named Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission. Additionally, Governor McAuliffe signed legislation providing critical enhancements to the Tobacco Commission to support long-term financial sustainability of Commission resources for economic revitalization in the Tobacco Region. The enhancements will focus investments on initiatives with clear and measureable outcomes directly aligned with the Commission's strategic plan and goals.

Speaking about today's announcement at a ceremonial bill signing in Danville, **Governor McAuliffe said**, "I am pleased to announce Evan Feinman's appointment as Executive Director of the Tobacco Commission, representing another step forward in revitalizing and redeveloping the communities in the Tobacco Region and building the new Virginia economy. Mr. Feinman will help us continue to maximize our existing assets and ensure the greatest return on our investments in this region of the Commonwealth. I also want to thank Senator Ruff and Delegate Kilgore for their efforts on this bipartisan legislation."

"The Tobacco Commission has played an important role in the revitalization of the Tobacco Region," **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Maurice Jones**. "The combination of the additional tools provided by the legislation and the addition of Evan Feinman to the leadership team will catalyze new efforts of the Commission on behalf of the people of the region."

"I am honored that the Governor and Secretary Jones have entrusted me with this responsibility," **said Evan Feinman**. "I am looking forward to working closely with the commissioners and the staff to help support the economic growth of this region that I care about so much."

Delegate Terry Kilgore served as Chief Patron for House Bill 2330, which is identical to Senate Bill 1440, for which Senator Frank Ruff served as Chief Patron. The bills rename the Tobacco Indemnification and

Community Revitalization Commission as the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (the Commission) and enhance the Commission's tools to make strategic investments in the tobacco region. Specific provisions include:

- Changes the Commission's name to the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission to better align with its current mission
- Establishes the Tobacco Region Revolving Loan Fund to make loans to local governments to finance the cost of a project
- Requires a dollar for dollar match for all economic development grant awards (no match currently required)
- Requires a biennial comprehensive strategic plan process
- Establishes a Manager to determine financial viability and feasibility for distribution of monies from the Commission's Fund
- Establishes an online database of all Commission awards, with project goals
- Reduces the number of commission members from 31 to 28 and requires that at least 13 members have expertise in business, economic development, investment banking, finance or education.

“The Tobacco Commission has served as an economic driver and an invaluable revitalization resource for Southwest Virginia,” **said Delegate Kilgore, Tobacco Commission Chairman.** “The legislation the Governor signed today takes important steps to build on our past accomplishments and ensures greater successes in the future. I look forward to working with the new Executive Director, Evan Feinman, and all of the Commission members to implement this legislation and bring more economic opportunity to our communities.”

“The Tobacco Commission has made significant positive investments to address the unique economic, educational and workforce challenges facing Southern Virginia and the entire Tobacco Region,” **said Senator Ruff, Tobacco Commission Vice-Chairman.** “The additional financial and administrative tools in this legislation will enhance the Commission's capacity to make strategic investments in pursuit of our revitalization goals. I look forward to working with new Commission Executive Director Evan Feinman and the Governor's economic development team to diversify the economy and position the region for future growth.”

Evan Feinman previously served as Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources for Governor McAuliffe. Prior to his appointment, he served as Deputy Policy Director for the Governor's transition team after his election. Evan has worked on multiple campaigns at the state and federal level, and at the Commonwealth Institute, a budget and fiscal policy think tank in Richmond. Evan joined the McAuliffe campaign as policy director in late 2012. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia, spent two years on a fellowship with the Public Interest Research Groups working on energy and transportation policy, and then attended law school at Washington and Lee. He is a Lynchburg native and currently resides in Richmond.

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